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ABSTRACT

The exploratory interview is one field method for studying how professionals write as part of their jobs that is also an effective device for preparing composition instructors to teach technical writing. This field research method is a loosely guided discussion in which the technical communicator ranges freely, widely, and in depth about personal experience, attitudes, and opinions. Interviewing can provide the following specific advantages not found in most practical experience: familiarity with the role and "street knowledge" of the technical professional, awareness of the full rhetorical situation and the larger communication context of the task, simultaneous contact with the process and the products of the professional who must write, and acquaintance with a wide range of professional activity. Although the field work is the preeminent stage, specific operations should precede and follow interviews. The whole sequence includes planning the project to meet specific objectives, selecting and contacting the organizations and respondents, constructing the interview guide, conducting the interviews, and analyzing the recorded responses and observations. (RL)

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INTERVIEWING OF TECHNICAL COMMUNICATORS: A FIELD STUDY METHOD FOR TEACHER PREPARATION

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Scholarship on technical writing needs field research in many areas, but particularly on those topics adjacent to our traditional concerns. We need studies focusing on the engineer, architect, or other technical professional who writes as part of his job, more than on the professional writer; studies on the process of technical writing, more than on the product; studies on technical writing as part of the communication system, more than as a separate task; studies on the skills considered important by the professionals, more than on those selected by educators.

One field method for studying some of these basic communication questions also happens to be an effective device for preparing composition instructors to teach technical writing. This research method is the exploratory interview, a loosely guided discussion in which the technical communicator ranges freely, widely, and in depth about his experience, his attitudes, and his opinions. From the results of the interviews the researcher can construct a highly detailed picture of what is "out there," can identify problems, can formulate hypotheses--can, in short, discover new information rather than confirm what he knows intuitively. Based on my own interviewing studies of engineers, this paper will describe the exploratory interviewing method and its application to the training of technical writing teachers.

As a field method, open-ended interviewing can be a tool aiding in the design phase of standardized survey research. By interviewing before constructing a questionnaire, scholars can ask better questions; ask more radical, provoking questions; ask the questions nobody even knew to ask. Exploratory interviewing is also an independent research method capable of producing reliable, valid data--either narrowly based, used for specific educational purposes; or broadly based, used to support basic research in the discipline.[1] In fact, although the survey questionnaire is commonly favored because the results are readily quantified, the open interview is more appropriate for studying an elite group with highly specialized information, because it can accommodate unanticipated responses in depth, and because the interviewer does not categorize the respondent's experience but rather follows his lead, adapting the questions to suit the individual.

But what does this research method have to do with preparing composition instructors for teaching technical writing? In fact, a great deal. For most English teachers, taking over a technical writing class demands learning something about new subject matter, new techniques, and new formats; but most of all, it demands learning about special purposes and familiarizing themselves with rhetorical situations in places where their students will be employed. This leap into the "real world" cannot be fully accomplished without some practical experience through employment, an internship, or consulting, options advocated by Paul Anderson at this CCCC session two years ago.[2] Although working as a technical writer has distinct advantages for preparing teachers, such practical experience

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may be too time consuming or simply incompatible with an academic schedule. Moreover, a position as a technical writer has an inherent limitation for teacher preparation: the focus is on the professional technical writer, not on the engineer or other technical person as a writer. By interviewing personnel on the job, by entering their "world of work," the English teacher can gain access to them as writers, can acquire their point of view, can learn about their communication acts and tasks--can, in effect, successfully make the leap from the classroom and library to the factory, the lab, or the corporation room.

While allowing the instructor to pursue his usual commitments, interviewing can serve as a partial substitute for a technical writing job--a fact that became apparent to me when interviewing engineers in connection with the design of a technical writing curriculum. Moreover, interviewing can provide the following specific advantages not found in most practical experience:

1. Familiarity with the role and "street knowledge" of the technical professional. Exploratory interviewing demands honest give-and-take with the respondent who is wearing his professional hat and operating from his own turf. By actively participating in this interaction, the interviewer learns about the tehnical person's customary role and his speech, including the technical and organizational jargon. Contrary to consulting or teaching where the instructor must follow a teaching script and where his own learning is secondary, in the interview he openly can adapt to the respondent, and thus is more likely to learn about the professional's real behavior, experiences, and attitudes--to become familiar with his feelings ("Writing is mostly a waste of time. It takes my eye off the job.") and his problems ("Memos can surprise people, and can end up in the strangest places," as one young engineers complained to me during my curriculum interview project[3]).

2. Awareness of the full rhetorical situation and the larger communication context of the task from the viewpoint of the technical professional as writer--the position the students will soon occupy. The technical writing literature can never represent the rich complexity of any real situation, and although there is overlap with the technical writer's position, many of the issues and perspectives are different. Interviewing can give a holistic picture of the organizational communication system where all speaking and writing acts are interdependent. It can furnish detailed narratives with fully developed readers and plots thick with conflicting purposes and the multiple constraints of deadlines, company policies, regulatory requirements, client demands, documentation needs, and supervisors with appropriate punch lines. ("Write this over so your wife would understand it," and "Sloppy writing makes me wonder if the engineering is sloppy too.")

3. Simultaneous contact with the process and the products of the professional who must write, not of the professional writer. The English teacher working as a technical writer is usually not assigned the same tasks as the engineer who writes as part of his job. Even if they work together on the same assignment, their tasks and roles in the composing process are different. Interviewing can give a full assessment of communication tasks common to a technical profession and how the writer actually goes about them, how he composes. Then in light of the writer's comments, the interviewer can read and evaluate

the products, in fact, collect a file of models, each example existing in a real context and as the result of a living process.

4. Acquaintance with a wide range of professional activity. Employment at one or two firms can provide a biased view of a profession, whereas extensive interviewing of respondents selected from a multitude of settings and functions can give a balanced perspective. Moreover, interviewing is a way to keep abreast of innovations ("We have just about eliminated the formal report around here; it's too time consuming.") and to particularize the instructor's background in the employers of the majority of his students.

The advantages of studying many technical personnel as writers in organizations show that a small-scale interviewing project could be an invaluable tool, either for retraining of composition teachers for technical writing, or for broadening the background of experienced instructors. However, controlling reliability in open-ended interviewing is very difficult. It isn't enough for English teachers to be persuaded of interviewing's benefits; they must also be schooled in interviewing methodology in order to minimize the error at each stage of the investigation. Following research protocol is essential so that the investigator can have confidence in the results for his own use, and so that studies with potentially wider application can be accepted as part of the basic knowledge on technical communication. My purpose in the remainder of this paper, therefore, is to present a simple model of exploratory interviewing as a research tool to study technical professionals as writers in organizations, and to furnish some practical advice to prospective interviewers based on my own experience.

EXPLORATORY INTERVIEWING METHOD

Although the field work is the preeminent stage, the interviews should be both preceded and followed by specific operations, the entire research process embracing these five steps:

1. Planning the project to meet specific objectives.
2. Selecting and contacting the organizations and respondents.
3. Constructing the interview guide.
4. Conducting the interviews.
5. Recording and analyzing the responses and observations.

Step 1: Planning the Project

The first step in planning an interviewing project is to design the research to meet the investigator's goals. The open interview is appropriate for the overall objective of providing in-depth information on professionals as writers in organizations, but it may not suit the investigator's specific goals, and it may be impractical for him. An interviewing project is more time consuming than a questionnaire survey, for example, and it requires the cooperation not only of respondents, but of their employers who must allow access and company time for interviews.

With the prerequisite hours and contacts available, the investigator should define his goals and determine what kinds of information will suit his

requirements--for example, descriptions of experience, explanations of attitudes, evaluations of situations, or even identification of causes. Although the open interview is exploratory, the interviewing should be governed by a strong purpose and with some clear ideas about what might be found, though formally stated hypotheses are not necessary. In effect, the investigator should ask himself: What do I want to know? What will I do with the answers? Then he can determine if the interview is the appropriate technique and exactly what he hopes to achieve through it.

If his purpose is to determine course objectives, and if, for example, he wants to know what percentage of professionals graduating from a technical program give oral presentations in their first years on the job, the questionnaire seems the more pertinent instrument. However, if he wants an explanation of data on professionals who need presentation skills, and if he wishes to know the task in detail, together with the graduate's problems, procedures, and attitudes in preparing these oral reports, the interview is the appropriate choice.

The next job in planning the project is surveying the published materials to see what has been done. The professional literature has a somewhat peculiar relationship with open interviewing, however, being both irrelevant and yet absolutely essential to it--irrelevant because the information gained through the interviewer's experience will never be found written up anywhere; essential because no one can interview from a naive position. To explore in depth and to perceive significance requires an adequate framework. Therefore, prior to interviewing, the composition teacher must read extensively about technical communication, in general, and about the professional communication of his students, in particular.

If, despite this preparation, the interviewer has any doubts about his plans or the methods, he can plan the interviewing for separate stages so that techniques can be perfected and objectives clarified on the basis of early results. I followed this two-tiered procedure in my first project, the purpose of which was to provide a pragmatic foundation for the design of a communication curriculum relevant to the professional needs of Wayne State University's engineering graduates. Supplementing my teaching experience in technical writing, practical work as a scientific editor, and formal study of the field, my interviewing was intended to aid in the design of objectives, assignments, and evaluation instruments for students, as well as in the preparation of course materials to assist English instructors new to technical writing. My main purpose, therefore, was to clarify, detail, and expand the published statements on communication tasks and skills of entry-level engineers, to flesh out with solid descriptions such popular survey items as the supreme importance of writing clearly,[4] and tasks with designations like "written reports to [my] boss about my work."[5] My secondary objectives were to learn about the engineer's communication attitudes, procedures, and training.

After the objectives are planned to meet the overall purpose for the interviewing, the investigator must decide whom to interview.

Step 2: Selecting the Respondents

The selection and number of respondents in any study is a compromise between accuracy and what is possible, but particularly so for open interviewing inside private industry. Although the goal is to represent the whole described population as closely as possible with a sizable and true sample, getting interviews at all is a big obstacle and should be the primary consideration, especially since in open interviews the sampling is less significant than other stages in producing error. In short, sampling procedures should be flexibly applied so that they don't bar the interviewer from an organization. (The interviewer may find as I did that no firm will comply with all requests, but that few places will reject a proposal altogether if one is amenable to modifications.)

The organizations and individual employees are both selected in two stages: first, the overall target population to be studied, and second, the individual representatives of the whole group. The target group of organizations, dictated by the study aims, is easily characterized, but random sampling of these employers is usually precluded by limitations on access and travel. Representatives of specified categories should, therefore, be selected by a quota, explictly considering the availability of contacts to facilitate entry and the degree of accessibility once inside the organization.

Guided by placements of Wayne's engineering graduates, I defined the major types and sizes of first employers comprising the target organizations for the curriculum study. Then I contacted five firms representing these categories, distributing them in approximate proportion to percentage of placements: two super manufacturing corporations, one large public utility, one medium-sized design company (with about 500 professionals), and one small consulting firm (with about 100 engineers). References from individual engineering faculty, sponsorship by the Dean, and my position as Coordinator of Technical Writing were points to establish the project's credibility in a letter to the contact person at each firm. The letter requested assistance in creating more adequate communication courses for our engineers, some of whom would probably be the firm's future employees. This stance received a favorable reply from management and was the message they passed on to the individual employee.

Accompanying the initial letter was a full statement of the project's purpose and format, specific instructions on the choice of respondents, and requests for communication samples, together with a pledge of confidentiality to the individual and to the organization. Although noting that project criteria could be adapted to the company's situation, I made fairly modest requests, for example, a 30-minute interview, spaced at 45-minute or 1-hour intervals; this schedule resulted in at least 45-minute discussions because of respondents' interest, while being a tolerably short commitment for management.

The selection of individual employees is, of course, beyond direct control of the investigator. However, the criteria (characteristics of the target group), designation of categories, and random selection of individuals should be requested. After the choices are made, the interviewer should ascertain whether the employer confined selection to certain units or functions, and he should analyze the respondents for covert control of the sampling. (When all

respondents were superstars, I concluded that the company image had played a hand in the process.)

Because my study's purpose was to determine the professional communication needs of Wayne's engineering graduates, I requested a sample of engineers ranging from entry-level up to six years experience, distributed over function and discipline. I also asked to interview correlated supervisors, and to have a preparatory interview with someone who could provide an overall picture of the firm and its policies. The company then set up the interviews or contacted the employees so I could schedule them, thereby establishing the project's credibility. (The number of individual respondents per firm ranged from six to fifteen, with interviews running from 45 minutes to several hours over separate visits.)

After the interview appointments are scheduled, the investigator must decide what questions to ask.

Step 3: Constructing the Interview Guide

Although an exploratory interview is a real discussion in which the interviewer's sensitivity is the most crucial factor in obtaining full and accurate information, an interview guide is required to insure achieving the research goals. The guide outlines the topics, sets the format and wording of the questions, specifies any standardized items to ask of all respondents, and organizes a logical structure for the discussion. No interview will ever proceed exactly according to the guide, but the detailed planning will help the interviewer get all the desired information and get it with a minimum of error. I found that the preparation of the questionnaire and the use of an abbreviated one-page outline during the interview itself were essential for maintaining the focus of the interview in the midst of lively interaction with the respondent and transcription of the answers.

Working from the basic list of planned topics, the investigator must select each specific question according to the objectives and must construct each to achieve validity. Clarity and neutrality are absolutes. Questions must be unambiguous. However, they should not suggest the direction for answers to take nor provide choices in the manner of a questionnaire, for this will limit the results to what the investigator anticipated. All questions must be as neutral as possible, excluding any indications of what the interviewer would judge to be a favorable reply. (Even a seemingly straightforward question such as, "Do you revise?" may cause the respondent to believe he should be revising.)

The format of questions should be predominantly open-ended, designed to get a free response. Some open questions can be quite direct ("How adequate were the instructions and advice you were given for this writing task?"), and others very indirect, mere suggestions to provoke the respondent's own ideas ("How do you feel about the assessment of writing here?"). Within this fluid context, some questions can be standardized--furnished to each person in exactly the same way so that the answers can be reliably quantified. Through explicitly worded, standardized questions can be open ("When you are assigned a new writing task, what do you do first?"). Others can very pointedly follow up on an open

question, even probing in a closed format ("Do you follow a model when working on a new writing task?"). Still others can just ask for simple facts.

After the questions are formulated, they must be organized into a conversational structure that will gain the respondent's cooperation so he will provide accurate, full answers. An elite interview must develop the topics to be stimulating and worthwhile for the respondent, while provoking little anxiety or hostility. The basic pattern to gain this rapport is to sequence questions by the "funnel movement" used in moving from the open question to the probe. General questions must precede specifics which may influence the answer. Also, sensitive or threatening questions, and complex subjects should come only after the line of questioning has clarified their purpose and encouraged the respondent's involvement to the point where he is likely to tell the truth, even if it is damaging to himself. Thus, my interview guide opened with the neutral topic of communication tasks, progressed to the potentially threatening subject of individual skills, gradually broached assessment, and concluded with the exploration of the composition process, difficult to articulate and demanding of honest introspection.

After the interview guide is completed, and either memorized or abstracted for reference in the interview, the investigator should prepare to conduct the interview itself.

Step 4: Conducting the Interview

A prerequisite for establishing the essential rapport is a suitable meeting place with sufficient privacy for getting detailed, honest answers. Opportunities to observe the technical professional in his work place are also valuable to the interviewer. Unfortunately, privacy and observation are usually incompatible; thus the choice is between interviewing privately in a separate room, or openly in the usual environment where the respondents can be observed interacting with their colleagues--their written work at hand, and their professional roles more firmly intact. In my experience, interviews were more successful in the regular work place, despite the drawbacks. After some curiosity from their fellows, privacy was usually sufficient, and the advantages of observing the engineer under fairly normal circumstances more than compensated for the longer adjustment period. Moreover, the work location often permitted contacts with other respondents, especially higher level supervisors with whom it is usually difficult to schedule an interview.

The opening of the discussion should aim to inspire the respondent's confidence and interest. Briefly introducing himself, the investigator should forecast the purpose, method, and topics of the interview. Even if his sole aim is to educate himself, the respondent will probably be satisfied by hearing this purpose cast in terms of improving the communication of future professionals. Finally, the confidentiality pledge should be re-emphasized, particularly as it applies to the individual's protection within the organization.

Although the interviewer should conduct the discussion according to the interview guide, the interaction should take precedence. By nature, the objectivity of the interview guide is in a constant state of tension with the subjective rapport between the two individuals, but it is the rapport which is most

significant to a productive interview. Rapport first demands that the interviewer be an attentive listener, and then follow the respondent's lead. Maintaining openness with nods, eye contact, and neutral remarks ("I see," and "Could you tell me more about that?"), he should, without prejudicing the results by any reinforcement, encourage the respondent to feel positive about his contribution. Motivating the respondent to become involved is the next step, for if he is stimulated by the discussion, he will overcome his initial reserve, disdain, or anxiety, and begin to voluntarily offer answers both beyond the questions and surrounding them. No single approach will motivate everyone, of course; the successful interviewer must be keenly sensitive to each personality, adapting his own style to fit the individual.

Although the potential interviewer must be prepared to play several roles, I found that engineers' expectations were all variations on my official posture of asking for their assistance with our courses. Some engineers came with shopping lists of goals and ideas ("Don't teach long formal reports; hardly anybody bothers with them anymore."). Others came with gripes about their training in technical writing ("We learned how to write first one kind of report and then another, none of 'em any use here."). Involving these respondents meant listening to their advice seriously, letting them feel it might have some impact. Other engineers wanted to have a real exchange on communication problems. Motivating these respondents required a willingness to take positions and give advice, even offering honest opinions about particular reports--despite the fact that this direct expression of views runs counter to protocol. Many young engineers, however, saw themselves as students and me as the professor. Some of them wanted advice; more of them, seeking catharsis, wanted to complain about supervisors, training, company policies, writing problems. A few even sought my assistance in enlightening management on more rational communication policies. Encouraging these respondents meant being an empathic listener who yet maintained the confidentiality of interviews in the face of importunities to carry messages, and who followed up complaints with probing questions so that the interaction didn't become a counseling session.

Rapport is essential, but just as the lack of it can mean a dearth of data, too much of it can lead to distortion. If the interviewer becomes too involved, the respondent may try to create answers where none exist or slant them to suit what he believes the interviewer wants to hear. Actually, the successful interviewer should take advantage of the rapport to probe for the answers not forthcoming. Often significant information is so buried--frequently behind a shield protecting the self image--that the interviewer must dig by pressing for explanations, definitions, details. (Two engineers both claimed to revise when composing reports. Under probing, the one finally admitted revising repeatedly on his own time with help from his wife, while the other eventually pleaded that he knew he should revise but practically never did: "I'm a pretty good writer and usually let things go the way they come out the first time round.")

Probing is not the only way to correct for respondent prejudice, especially if it is unconscious. Corroborating evidence can be sought in observation of the respondent himself, particularly his non-verbal language, and the environment. I observed the engineer's behavior and speaking skills; I asked to read reports and other typical writing; I attempted to interview supervisors, both to check responses and also to see divergence of views; I attended meetings and

presentations; I observed the engineer interacting with colleagues, taking calls, meeting with supervisors. All these observations both correct and expand the interview's results.

After conducting the interview, the investigator must determine how the responses and observations will be transcribed and analyzed.

Step 5: Recording and Analyzing the Information

The objective in recording the interview is to get a relatively complete and accurate transcript of the responses, with descriptions of the interviewer's observations. The interviewer must listen and observe carefully to achieve this goal, controlling the distortion caused by hearing and seeing what he wants to find, not what is there. Simultaneous with listening and interacting, he must also take notes--unobtrusively, but sufficiently so that he can reconstruct the experience after the meeting is over. My own method consists of scribbling keywords and quotes while maintaining eye contact, only using the interview guide as a reminder. (Question sheets with answer space make analysis easier, but they can disrupt the discussion and even make the respondent nervous about the recording.)

Soon after the interview, the researcher should write a detailed transcription. Summarized responses should be highlighted with as many direct quotations as possible--the gold nuggets of exploratory interviewing--and include the key inflections and gestures. The rapport and the nature of the interaction should be described, including jokes, antagonisms, embarrassments. Finally, the interviewer should characterize the respondent's behavior and attitudes. ("John came armed with a copy of the Fogg Index, a sheaf of reports, and a page of suggestions. He conveyed great confidence in his skills, and acted as if he were a model for my edification.")

After the transcripts are completed, they are ready for analysis--another step where the open interviewing method plays the devil with the investigator's efforts to control error. The transcript data from the interaction is an unwieldy mass of bits and pieces--overlapping, incomplete, often unclassifiable. Moreover, the data partly represents the relationship of the interviewer and the respondent, so the conclusions must be qualified for this distortion. Despite these inherent problems, the transcripts can produce reliable results if the investigator follows sound methods. (Although the detailed quantification techniques are beyond the scope of this paper, the basic analytical approaches can be applied to curriculum research and instruction.)

First, true statements can be made about the target group of communicators by quantifying answers to the standardized questions. (The smaller the sample, the less reliable the results, of course.) Responses to objective questions and items posed in relatively closed formats can be classified for tabulation, and even open questions posed in a standardized way can be analyzed by reading over all of the answers and then creating the mutually exclusive categories which fit the responses. After the investigator constructs the code, another reader can go over the transcripts and score the answers.

Although the transcripts' unstructured reality does not easily give precise measurements, it is well suited for qualitative analysis, the creation of a total picture of the technical communicator's experience. My own analysis included multiple readings: first to recreate, understand, and interpret; then to identify significant questions suggested by the responses, and patterns formed by them; finally to characterize and classify answers, always looking for details which complete the puzzle and for unusual items, "loose pieces" which point to the unknown.

Analysis of my interviews was valuable to me in teaching classes and in designing the technical writing curriculum. In the broadest sense, the transcripts raised significant questions about many communication procedures and practices of engineers and how best to prepare students for their professional positions. My results suggested, for example, that the inflated views some engineers have of their writing skills (cockiness leading them to ignore suggestions and reject criticism) may have originated in false confidence generated by a technical writing course. Whether true or not, such hypotheses broadened my awareness and reinforced the value of one man's advice: "Don't teach any one method; teach them to be flexible."

The interviews also contributed in very direct ways to the curriculum The transcripts' concrete examples of real communication experiences were used as the frame for building discussion and lecture topics on types of problems and technical writing principles. An effective executive summary from a long report, cited for conciseness and two-part report structure, was placed in the context of numerous revisions by an engineer whose supervisor insisted: "I don't care how big the project, I want what I need on one page, two at the most." Particular cases were also used to construct exercises and assignments, such as the recreation of a battle over an error in prototype design as material for writing a report. (The student writes his initial report from a packet of information which includes not only an overflow of data on the technical problem, but a full scenario on the organizational problem and the rhetorical situation with his professional role as writer.)

But interviews were not only important for furnishing the particular case. Analysis of the transcripts contributed to the selection and preparation of course objectives and assignments by identifying those significant skills and tasks that I might have ignored if basing the curriculum solely on traditional means, and by characterizing them fully with all of their constraints so that the course would reflect professional practice and problems. For example, a big category of writing from my transcripts was minor, informal pieces from oral information--usually completed in a short time, in a single draft, in the absence of supervision. Screening of the transcripts showed write-ups of meetings ("I write more minutes than anything."), presentations, interviews, trips, visits, and calls, as typical of these lowly tasks often delegated to the lowest man, the junior engineer. Despite unimportant status, this writing often played a part in skills assessments of young engineers, and it caused major problems from being written almost on demand and being based almost solely on oral information. Out of these needs, I wrote pragmatic course objectives on impromptu composing and on "translating" from speech to writing--selecting, organizing, and adapting material for a new form and purpose. To fulfill these objectives, I prepared an assignment of a meeting and its report, students participating in a small-group discussion(another ignored form) to make decisions about a project, and then each writing as an impromptu a set of "action minutes" to report plans to their supervisor and confirm them with their colleagues. Numerous aspects of the situation were elaborated (for example, func-

tional evaluation by fellow students reflecting professional custom, "Does this report adequately represent the group's consensus?), so that our students might not echo an engineer who, recalling his first meeting report for me, said: "I was dumbfounded. I didn't know what to do with my pile of notes."

Applications such as these can contribute to the professionalism of a technical writing course. However, for the composition instructor, the act of interviewing itself, the direct experience, is more significant than the analysis of the data. In this sense, the transcripts are his own record of the "real world" to which he can refer to see the event anew, as well as to form new generalizations. Exploratory interviewing has thus provided him with practical experience and a most useful text for teaching technical writing.

NOTES

[1]This paper is indebted to the following sources for the discussion of standard interviewing methods: Lewis A. Dexter, Elite and Specialized Interviewing (Evanston: Northwestern University Press, 1970); S.A. Richardson, B.S. Dohrenwend, and D. Klein, Interviewing: Its Forms and Functions (New York: Basic Books, Inc., 1965); Donald P. Warwick and Charles A. Lininger, The Sample Survey: Theory and Practice (New York: McGraw Hill, 1975); and Herbert F. Weisberg and Bruce D. Bowen, An Introduction to Survey Research and Data Analysis (San Francisco: W.H. Freeman and Co., 1977).

[2]Paul V. Anderson, "Teaching the Teacher What Government and Industry Want From Technical Writing," in Technical and Professional Communication: Teaching in the Two-Year College, Four-Year College, Professional School, ed. Thomas M. Sawyer (Ann Arbor: Professional Communication Press, Inc., 1977), pp. 65-78.

[3]All quotations from engineers are from my personal transcripts from interviews at five companies in Southeastern Michigan, 1977-78.

[4]Richard M. Davis, "Technical Writing: Who Needs It?" Engineering Education, 68 (November 1977), 210.

[5]Jon M. Huegli and Harvey D. Tschirgi, "An Investigation of Communication Skills Application and Effectiveness at the Entry Job Level," Journal of Business Communication, 12 (Fall 1974), 25.